

I thought it would be worth starting off by taking the opportunity to bust a few myths.

Firstly, there is no connection between the Isle of Man positive case and the case picked up on Sunday. Neither does a case in either Island mean the end of the Air Bridge. Both cases were picked up from travellers and the risk of transmission is extremely low. It is also worth saying that whilst this is our first case that has been picked up for months, that is a direct result of bringing in the 7 day testing regime. It is quite possible, that someone has come in with the virus before now, may be asymptomatic, but we would not have picked it up with 14 day self-isolation. But it did not matter as they would not be infectious after that time. The fact we picked up the case through 7 day testing is a good thing and shows the system is working and is what we expected.

I am aware that there were also rumours circulating on Friday that we had a positive case then. We didn't. The positive case was tested on Sunday and we got the results later that day. The fact it is so soon after Friday is just coincidence.

For whatever reason, the number of false rumours being spread on social media has been growing over the last couple of weeks and I would ask anyone reading or hearing supposed facts to ask whether the person putting them forward is a trusted source and not just a friend of friend who supposedly knows the real truth. These false rumours help no-one, indeed they can cause fear and anxiety and have a really detrimental impact on the most vulnerable in our society.

Since the beginning we have said we would be open and honest with you. That we would not get everything right but we would tell you when we hadn't and that when we had new information we would let you know and advise you what our plans were, as soon as possible. That is what we are doing today.

Gavin has advised how we are looking at taking a regional approach with those regions with prevalence rates above 30 in 100,000 moving to Group A. At present, those regions fall in the Midlands and the North. So, if that remains the case, the majority of those requiring medical treatment in England would not be affected. However, for those who may need to receive treatment in a Group A region, we will retain the process we had in Phase 5a, which is effectively testing on day 7 with passive follow-up if the test is negative. In addition, those needing to travel to a Group A region for compassionate reasons will be considered by Public Health on a case by case basis.

Clearly, this is not a great time to have to make any changes, with parents needing to take their children to university. That is why we are giving as much notice as possible of what we may need to do if the situation in England continues as it has been doing recently. The current trend isn't looking positive as it isn't in France, which is recording more daily cases now than earlier in the year. So, whilst we are hoping for the best, we really have to prepare for the worst.

As always, we will be taking a risk based approach, and by looking at the data at a regional level, which public health are now able to provide, we can ensure our decisions are appropriate and proportionate to the risk.